NEW BOOKS SEEN THROUGH REVIEWS AND COMMENT

EARLY SUMMER FICTION AND MORE SERIOUS BOOKS

Gilbert Parker in an Unaccustomed Light Vein—A House Painter's Vivid Realism.

Soho Slums and Epigrams—Fiction by Frank Harris, Edgar Jepson and Others.

New International Year Book—Volumes on Nursing, Outing, Immigration, Etiquette, Drama.

The advantages of the Canadian Northwest and the superiority of the people who grow up with it over the unfortunates who cling to the older civilization are demonstrated in Sir Gilbert Parker's "You Never Know Your Luck" (George H. Doran Company), a tale that is shorter and in much lighter vein than is customary with the author. The heroine is a remarkably nice girl who not only shows astonishing shrewdness and good sense but also does the right thing in suppressing her incipient passion and in restoring the young man who attracts her to his lawful wife. We could have wished that that family history had been less conventionally theatrical, and, for that matter, that the stage had been less in the author's mind in writing the story.

It seems rather beneath the dignity of literature to drag in the suffragette spoiling of the Derby to explain the youth's disastrous betting losses. The description of English club life is more in accordance with the Parker traditions. The conduct of both husband and wife seems unusually foolish; but trivial as the grounds for the quarrel are, there was need of one to enable the man to redeem himself amid the favoring influences of Canadian climate and Canadian life. The heroine pounds the higher standards hard into the repentant wife. The offensive lawyer and the court scene might easily have been left out, and the attainment of the needed money might have been managed less clumsily. But Sir Gilbert Parker here is relaxing; he is merely writing a pleasant idyl for summer reading that must not be judged by the rules of art. His story is readable, which is the main thing, and his heroine too charming to be wasted in this manner.

SOME NEW FICTION.

Whether the credit is due to the house painter who wrote down his thoughts or to the editor who put the manuscript into shape, "The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists," by Robert Tressall (Frederick A. Stokes Company), is as remarkable a piece of realism as any Russian has drawn, a vivid photograph of the oppressed workingman and the conditions that are crushing him. The author relates what happens to a group of house painters while they are carrying on one job of work; what they do and say and think; how they live; how they are exploited by their foremen and their employers. One of them is a thinker, but when he explains to them the evils of their conditions and suggests the remedies he is not understood and incurs their hostility. It is a set of portraits taken from life that will act on the reader like a nightmare. The author makes no argument—he has as much contempt for socialism as for political parties. He presents the facts he knows regarding one set of workingmen who are helpless against their fate. That there are plenty of workingmen in England and in other countries who are more fortunate than these does not affect the demonstration that evils such as are described here exist and are common.

The contrast between the real thing and the literary imitation may be seen clearly by reading the Tressall book in connection with Edwin Pugh's "Punch and Judy" (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis). This is a picture of a slum in Soho, a view of the lower strata of London Bohemia that would be very effective if not overburdened with cleverness and epigram and with occasional outbreaks of fine writing. The indigent composer is only an intruder in the company; his presence is to be accounted for by the morbid craving for bohemianism that is supposed to go with the artistic temperament. His bombastic journalistic friend with his outbursts of paradoxical philosophic talk is merely a visitor. The slum people are sketched vigorously and are amusing at first, but the author, after having created them, apparently does not know what to do with them and makes them repeat their performances over and over again. The episodes he devises and the morals he draws are as conventional as the most philistine taste could ask for. The puppets are fine, but the showman cannot work them. The book is entertaining all the same.

Even Frank Harris has turned to simplicity in "Great Days" (Mitchell Kennerley, New York), a romance on the approved lines of smuggling and privateering when England was in fear of Bonaparte's invasion. The author writes fluently and carries his reader with him. His hero is a British youth of uncommon openness of mind, who is enabled through his illegal intercourse with the French to form a fairer opinion of that nation than his countrymen have yet acquired. His adventures and love affairs are interesting. Incidentally Mr. Harris discusses at considerable length the vexed question of Napoleon's greatness, admires the efficiency of the American navy before the war of 1812 and expresses some novel opinions about naval power.

In "The Intervening Lady" (The Bobbs-Merrill Company), Edgar Jepson returns to his old standbys, Lady Noggs and the admirable Tinker. In sixteen episodes the imperturbable and infallible young person carries out her plans with all the skill with which the author has endowed her. The episodes are all interesting; those depicting her as a child are amusing; those in which she appears as a young lady, and is at times aided by Tinker, are ingenious but now and then verge on the disagreeable. Mr. Jepson has invented a type, whether in girl or boy form, as entertaining as Sherlock Holmes, and readers will feel grateful to him whenever he chooses to revive it and put it in action, as he does in this collection of stories.

There is remarkably little about the process of obtaining a homestead or of working on it in the "Letters of a Woman Homesteader," by Elinore Pruitt Stewart (Houghton Mifflin Company). On the other hand, there are enthusiastic descriptions of nature and of adventures in the open, pleasant accounts of interesting neighbors and optimistic views about life in general. The author seems to revel in the discomforts of life. From her book we infer that the climate of the portion of Wyoming she selected is more severe than that of the Yukon, but this may be due to the fact that she prefers to write in winter. Her account of her domestic relations is rather confusing, though it becomes plainer toward the end. We are assured that these are the genuine letters of an uneducated woman who secured a homestead—they read more like those of a writer in search of the picturesque. It would be well for women, tempted to follow her advice to do likewise, if they first made careful inquiry into the difficulties they would have to face. Cheerfulness might have little effect on land that is barren and without water.

The seven short stories by Jack London included in "The Strength of the Strong" (Macmillans) will acquaint the reader with his various styles. "The Sea Farmer" is a capital tale of the sea, the title story an apologue of primitive life. The author touches on socialism and labor disputes, he guesses at the scientific discoveries of the future, and in the last story in the book he shows his artistic quality at its best. The portrait of the peasant woman holding to her fanciful ideal is fine work.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR BOOK.

Apart from its intrinsic merits the "New International Year Book" (Dodd Mead and Company), edited by Dr. Frank M. Colby, has the advantage of being the only survivor of the annual encyclopedias of respectable workmanship made in America, and therefore the sole tool left for those who must use that kind of book of reference. It was a great help to all newspaper men, among others, when publication was resumed, and the present issue for the year 1913 is welcome. In substance the book is a yearly supplement to the "New International Encyclopedia," the latest and most valuable of American publications of the kind. It endeavors to cover for the whole field of human knowledge the record of the year's doings, which numerous publications of more limited scope deal with in condensed form as regards the subjects they are interested in. Some are restricted to political and statistical matters; others, such as the various almanacs, to little more than a registration of names and facts; others to biography, while some, more pretentious, are handicapped by the professional tastes of the specialists who contribute to them.

In the "New International Year Book" Dr. Colby, who has been connected with the undertaking from the beginning, has succeeded pretty well in holding his contributors to the impersonal, unpartisan attitude demanded by a book of reference. The events of the year are all noticed carefully and due prominence is given to those that were notable at the time, regardless of their place in the general encyclopedic scheme, which is the proper duty of a year book. The 1913 volume is fully up to the standard of its predecessors and remains the chief American authority for the happenings of the year.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION.

An extremely interesting little book has been written by Dr. Alfred Worcester in "Nurses for Our Neighbors" (Houghton Mifflin Company). Though it takes the general form of a history of nursing in this country and abroad, the history is colored by the author's consciousness of something lacking in modern methods both as regards the efficiency of nurses and the general practice of medicine. This he believes to be the absence of the personal interest, the losing sight of the patient as a human being in the interest of a "case" or a disease. The author believes in properly directed social service, but not does let that fact draw him away from his plea for more personal regard for the individual in doctors and nurses.

Full directions for the Italianized form of kindergarten teaching which is now fashionable are given by the person most competent to supply them in "Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook," by Maria Montessori, M. D. (Frederick A. Stokes Company). It describes the apparatus used and gives a summary of the method. The reader is referred for fuller particulars to "The Montessori Method."

Two seasonable little volumes of the "Outing Handbooks" series have appeared (Outing Publishing Company, New York). In "The Canoe" Robert E. Pinkerton not only tells how canoes should be handled in the water and on land but gives full and useful information regarding the equipment of those who take them into the wilds, and directions for camping. A more limited class of sportsmen is addressed in Charles Frederick Holder's "Salt Water Game Fishing," that which pursues big fish wherever they may be found. Though New York is touched, the author has much more to say about Florida, and still more about the Pacific coast.

Two little chemical monographs from the D. Van Nostrand Company can be judged only by the specialists for whom they are intended—"advanced students and research workers." "The Chemistry of Rubber," by B. D. Porritt, is of British origin. It seems to be rather limited in scope, perhaps somewhat behind American research, and to have little regard to the practical ends which the searchers for synthetical rubber have in view. The "Organometallic Compounds of Zinc and Magnesium," by Henry Wren, may be understood by those who can read the polysyllabic language devised by the chemistry of carbon compounds, with its attendant picturesque formulas. It is also British.

A little manual intended to aid librarians who have to deal with Italians has been prepared by John Foster Carr in "Immigrant and Library: Italian Helps" (Immigrant Education Society, New York). The pamphlet fulfils its object very well. It seems to presuppose, however, the possession of more books in foreign languages than most public libraries are likely to boast of, and no mention is made of the books that, we imagine, the immigrant and the society would require most, those, namely, that will help the newcomer to acquire the language of the country he has chosen.

The reports of the Cuban department of "Sanidad y Beneficencia" (Havana) are usually distinguished by articles by Dr. Juan Guiteras and other noted physicians. In that for November and December, 1913, Dr. Guiteras writes on "Yellow Fever in Jamaica," "Infantile Mortality in Cuba" and "Chinese Immigration," while other specialists deal with the typhoid epidemic in Pinar del Rio, the fear of leprosy, the fight against flies, and glanders.

A handy book of etiquette, with directions for many social functions, has been written by Florence Howe Hall, in "Good Form for All Occasions" (Harpers). The author gives much attention to dress. To the established functions of society—dinners, balls, weddings and so on—she adds more modern forms, such as automobile trips, bridge parties and behavior in hotels and roof gardens. She just touches on dancing in public.

For those who wish to combine information with the pleasure of tramping and wandering in the woods Julia Ellen Rogers has contrived a convenient pocket book, "Tree Guide" (Doubleday, Page and Company), describing the trees east of the Rockies. Each tree is on a page by itself, with a helpful illustration, sometimes in color. There are simple lists of classifications and an index, so that the reader is enabled to identify any tree readily.

OTHER BOOKS.

A story that is becoming far from uncommon in books is told by A. Loton Ridger in "A Wanderer's Trail" (Henry Holt and Company). The author was a young English clerk, with no great amount of money, who determined to see the world for himself. His travels lasted for six years, and he tried to earn a living in various ways as he went along. He is neither a journalist working his way as a tramp, nor, in the first half of his adventures at least, a writer looking for copy for a book. He puts down what happened to him and his impressions of places and men, and in so far his book has value; much of it is interesting, too. He sailed around the Horn to San Francisco, wandered along the Pacific coast to Alaska and the Klondike, then crossed to Japan, made his way into Manchuria and then sailed by way of Suez to the United States and back to England. For the Japanese he has very kindly feelings, as he seems to have had Japanese friends before leaving home. His second venture was to South Africa and far inland, crossing the Kalahari desert and working up the east coast to Zanzibar. This is more consciously a book of travel for he had the intention of writing about it. From Zanzibar he made his way to Ceylon, Burma and Calcutta, and visited the Straits Settlements, the Philippines and Hongkong. He saw a good deal of the world in a rather unorthodox fashion and tells his adventures without pretension.

The history of Thomas Mott Osborne's week in jail is told at great length in "Within Prison Walls" (Appletons), a book that will doubtless be referred to as authority by prison reformers. Mr. Osborne found much that was unpleasant for the prisoners in Auburn and possibly some things that should be corrected. He went in, however, with a heavy load of preconceived notions regarding the treatment of prisoners, whom he is disinclined to look upon as convicted criminals undergoing punishment. His comments are directed more against the theory on which the law acts in trying to restrain crime than against abuses in management which may be remedied by public officials.

A number of articles by the Hon. George W. Wickersham, Attorney-General during President Taft's administration, are collected under the title "The Changing Order" (G. P. Putnam's Sons). About half are addresses on legal themes, the rest are commentaries on the various important law cases that came up during the author's tenure of office.

While the construction of "The Continental Drama of To-day" by Barrett H. Clark (Henry Holt and Company) as a text book with questions on the subject matter is rather absurd, the book may prove convenient to persons who wish to talk about writers and plays that are discussed generally, without taking the trouble of reading their works. The author's method is to write a short biography with a catalogue of all the plays and brief summaries of the plots of those best known. He begins naturally with Ibsen and the other Scandinavians, then takes up the Russians, the Germans, the Frenchmen, the Italians, the Spaniards, the whole school of gloom, into which Giacosa and Perez Galdos have strayed for some unknown reason, while Rostand and Maeterlinck stand out as the nearest semblance of cheerfulness.

A RED STORY OF THE DAYS OF THE COMMUNE

The description in the first part of John Oxenham's story of "Red Wrath" (John Lane Company) lingers a good deal. The author insists upon his impressions; there is much reiteration, and the interest of the reader does not begin immediately. Granite is quarried in the islands of Chausey, off the western coast of France. The good priest is pictured for us. He is very gentle. He has a sorrow. Aliette, niece of the good priest, is beautiful and faithful. The love affair between Aliette and Ronan, the young mariner, is idyllic. Aliette's father, the quarry master, is the tyrant of the isles. He aims at monopoly and plans to reduce wages.

The dramatic element in the story begins here. It is the general feeling in the isles that Aliette's father ought to be made away with. We hear the gigantic Gros-Alain, the shrivelled little Feu-feu and the other quarry laborers declaring themselves in Lommic's cantine upon the subject of the monopolist's assassination. The aged Lommic is an interesting character. A soldier of the First Empire, he lost an arm at Moscow and a leg at Waterloo. What was left of him was loyal to the third Napoleon, and he was sorry for the Prussians when he heard that they were coming in 1870.

It was not the orators of the cantine, however, who removed the hated monopolist. Three desperate quarry masters met in the dead of night in the isolated and tenantless structure called the House of the Dead and drew lots to determine who should be the assassin. It was Fernande Vilard who held the cap from which the drawing was done. He was a dissolute man. He wished to marry Aliette and he hated Ronan. Aliette despised him. It was Vilarde who started the rumor that Ronan was the assassin of Aliette's father.

The second part of the story carries us to Paris. We are there through the siege by the Germans, and during the time of the Commune. The Communists impressed Ronan and Gros-Alain, and made them shoot from the barricades. It was a great risk that was taken by the two, but they were careful not to hit anybody. In their retreat from one of the outer barriers they passed through the Catacombs. At Montmartre Ronan was shot by a Prussian spy and was nursed by Margot, a handsome waitress. She was desperately in love with him, but he was faithful to Aliette. At Pere La Chaise he and Gros-Alain hid in a tomb. Gros-Alain died there, and it was three days before Ronan was able to get out.

Vilard was everywhere at Ronan's heels. This quarry master was a traitor and a spy, and he was determined that Ronan should be made away with. Ronan choked Vilard to death at the last. There is plenty of dramatic action in the story as well as a good deal of mannerism and repetition.

Books Received.

"Black's Medical Dictionary." John D. Comrie. (Adam and Charles Black; Macmillans.)
"The America's Cup Races." Herbert L. Stone. (Outing Publishing Company, New York.)
"A Great Adventuress." Joseph Turquan and Jules D'Auriac. (Herbert Jenkins; Brentano's.)
"The Income Tax." Edwin R. A. Seligman. (Macmillans.)
"The Soul of America." Stanton Cort. (Macmillans.)
"Romances of the Peerage." Thornton Hall. (Brentano's.)
"The Railways of the World." Ernest Protheroe. (George Routledge and Sons; E. P. Dutton and Company.)
"Physics of the Household." Carleton John Lynde, Ph. D. (Macmillans.)
"The History of the Dwelling House and Its Future." Robert Ellis Thompson. (J. B. Lippincott Company.)
"The Small Family System." C. V. Drysdale. (B. W. Huebsch, New York.)
"The Place of the Church in Evolution." John Mason Tyler. (Houghton Mifflin Company.)
"Dreams." Henri Bergson. (B. W. Huebsch.)
"Socialism and Motherhood." John Spargo. (B. W. Huebsch.)
"Florian Mayr." Ernst von Wolzogen. (B. W. Huebsch.)
"Idyls of a Dutch Village." S. Ulfers. (E. P. Dutton and Company.)
"Cross Trails." Herman Whitaker. (Harpers.)
"At the Casa Napoleon." Thomas A. Janvier. (Harpers.)
"Frivole." Kate Horn. (Brentano's.)
"The Vision Splendid." D. K. Broster and G. W. Taylor. (Brentano's.)
"Vocational Guidance." J. Adams Puffer. (Rand, McNally and Company, Chicago.)
"Progress and Plenty." James S. Paton. (The Shakespeare Press, New York.)
"Dramatic Portraits." P. P. Howe. (Mitchell Kennerley, New York.)
"What Is It All About?" Henry Blackman Sell. (The Laurentian Publishers, Chicago.)
"The A B C of Salesmanship." Thomas D. Rust. (R. F. Penno and Company, New York.)
"Our Dishonest Constitution." Allan L. Benson. (B. W. Huebsch.)
"American Aspirations." Charles Fleischer. (B. W. Huebsch.)
"Tender Buttons." Gertrude Stein. (Claire Marie, New York.)
"Travel Notes of an Octogenarian." W. Spooner Smith. (The Gorham Press, Boston.)
"Thinking God's Thoughts After Him." Henry Melville King, D. D. (The Gorham Press.)
"The Dramatic Works of Gerhart Hauptmann. Vols. III. and IV." Edited by Ludwig Lewisohn. (B. W. Huebsch.)
"Barbara." Kenneth Sawyer Goodman. (Vaughan and Gomme, New York.)
"The Game of Chess." Kenneth Sawyer Goodman. (Vaughan and Gomme.)
"Songs and Poems." Martin Schuetze. (The Laurentian Publishers.)
"Songs of the Dead End." Patrick MacGill. (Mitchell Kennerley.)
"Naval War College. International Law Topics and Discussions." (Government Printing Office, Washington.)
"Reminiscences of Old New Utrecht and Gowanus." Mrs. Bleecker Bangs. (The author, Brooklyn.)

FLAGG'S GALLERY OF CELEBRITIES

Courtesy Harper's Weekly.

No. 5—Robert W. Chambers.

Mr. Chambers, it will be observed, wears a monocle. His air of concentration is also partly due, perhaps, to the fact that he turns out two novels a year, which he writes out in longhand with a lead pencil.